

Migrant Youth Hip-Hoppers in Hamburg, Germany: Negotiating Institutional Politics and Social Integration

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The Hamburg HipHop Academy is a city-supported institution, which uses hip-hop to socially integrate youths with migration backgrounds into the German nation-state. To progress upwards in the Academy's hierarchical structure, youths build relationships with power-holders and peers, prove mastery of organizational norms, and conform their performance styles to the institution's expectations. The Academy's top-level Ensemble members act as cultural ambassadors for Germany through international exchanges. This article reveals how migrant hip-hoppers navigate the organizational politics of a German institution to become part of a "community of practice." Effective self-advocates master the organization's political structure through a process of micro-political integration. They learn a "shared repertoire" of actions, but these norms can inhibit youths' opportunities to progress equally within the system and to express themselves fully. In order for a government-sponsored institution to help migrant youths integrate, all youths must be able to contribute to organizational and artistic decision-making processes.

Introduction to Hamburg, Germany, in 2016

The year 2015 was one of unprecedented change for Germany. 1.1 million asylum-seekers entered the country looking for refuge.¹ A welcoming culture emerged: urbanites flooded train stations to meet new arrivals and clothing donations overwhelmed local charities. 22,299 new asylum-seekers took refuge in Hamburg, Germany's second most populated city (1.8 million).² Despite decades of uncertainty surrounding the social integration of immigrant populations, Germans presented a new face to the world. Integration, however, does not come without

1 Pandey 2016.

2 Flüchtlinge: Daten zur Zuwanderung 2016.

challenges. In fact, the country is still working to integrate 2nd and 3rd-generation migrant descendants, i.e., children or grandchildren of immigrants who arrived either as guest-workers in the 1950s to 1970s or as political or economic refugees in the 1980s–1990s. Prior to the refugee influx, Germany tallied four million “ethnic Muslims.” Unfortunately, alongside Germany’s welcoming culture, Islamophobia has resurfaced with protesters expressing fear of Muslims “taking over” the nation-state.

Amidst this socio-political climate, social integration projects are a practical solution to engage migrant youths and help them belong to the local community and by extension to Germany. According to the United Nations, social integration constitutes “a dynamic and principled process where all members participate in dialogue to achieve and maintain peaceful social relations.”³ Thus, for social integration to work, members of the host society and newcomers need to interact with another.⁴ The Hamburg HipHop Academy is one such integration project founded in 2007 in the eastern city district Billstedt. Through artistic expressions of hip-hop, the institution seeks to socially integrate participating youths (13–25 years old)—80% of whom have migration histories.⁵ The approximately 550 participants’ stories are as diverse as their ethnic backgrounds, whether Turkish, Vietnamese, Persian, Kurdish, Macedonian, Russian, Ghanaian or German.⁶

As a participant observer from 2010–2014, I attended Academy *Tanztheaterproduktionen* (dance theater productions), battles (dance-offs) and camps. I led interviews with classmates, Academy trainers and administrators, underground hip-hoppers, integration workers and schoolteachers in order to understand their views on the Academy’s efficacy as a social integration project. I also enrolled in a Level 1 NewStyle dance course in an immigrant-dense district of eastern Hamburg. There, I experienced firsthand the social integration into German society that is possible through hip-hop.

Applied ethnomusicologists can contribute greatly to social integration work. I strive to be an “advocate” anthropologist of music—one who uses her resources and output “to increase the power of self-determination for a particular culture group.”⁷ In this article, I aim to offer ideal solutions for integration that can best help migrant youths while at the same time, recognizing the human element of any institution, and the time and financial resource constraints of non-profit organizations. Applied ethnomusicologists are in a unique position to work towards social integration because music can act as an entry point for mutual communication among diverse

3 PeaceDialogue 2005.

4 Kathleen Van Buren (2010, 219) reminds applied ethnomusicologists that every community faces myriad problems and that we should not lose sight of that fact. In this paper, I focus on the Academy’s social integration aims, however there is another basic result of the organization’s popular dance classes: physical exercise.

5 Kanzlerin besucht Sprachkurs und HipHop-Academy 2010.

6 HipHop Academy Hamburg: Lokal – Global 2013.

7 Harrison 2012, 509, quoting Pettan 2008, 90 from Spradley and McCurdy 2000, 411.

groups of people.⁸ After establishing a key commonality and developing trust, applied ethnomusicologists then can delve more deeply into social or political issues.

Herein, I examine how migrant youths navigate the structures and politics of a government-funded institution. Their testimonies show how relationships to power players and peers affect social bonds in and feelings of belonging to a “community of practice.” A social learning theory of educational theorist Etienne Wenger, “community of practice” explains that in order to feel belonging in a community, one must “mutually engage” in a “joint enterprise” and take on common practices known as a “shared repertoire.”⁹ In this article, I reveal how politically savvy students master the Hamburg HipHop Academy’s political structure and norms, become successful self-advocates within the institution, and form their own community of practice. Through this process of social integration at the micro-level—what I term “micro-political integration,” they learn a “shared repertoire.” However, these norms of practice, particularly gendered ones, can inhibit chances for youths to progress equally within the system and express themselves fully. For all youths to feel as if they belong to the Academy community, it is essential that they can contribute their opinions to organizational and artistic decision-making processes. This is the ideal scenario. The challenge is—how do we best listen to less dominant voices? With this issue in mind, my article offers suggestions for future integration work via performing arts.

Meet the Hamburg HipHop Academy

Located near the train station in Billstedt, an eastern Hamburg district with more than half of its population having a migration background,¹⁰ the Kulturpalast cultural center houses the Academy’s offices and rehearsal spaces. The Academy also operates courses in schools and youth centers often in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods throughout Hamburg. In a city where private sports club fees are expensive and in-school sport teams and extra-curricular activities are limited, the Academy gives Level 1 students a place to learn new skills, build muscle strength and memory, and become physically and emotionally healthier youths.

In cooperation with the Kulturpalast, Turkish-German b-boy (breakdancer) Metin and “ethnic German” b-boy/graffiti artist Christian conceptualized the Academy as a project to benefit Billstedt youths by teaching them socially positive behavior through breakdancing, DJing, NewStyle dancing, graffiti art, beatboxing, rapping,

8 For literature on music, inter-cultural understanding and (double-sided) social integration efforts, see Hemetek 2010, Pettan 2010 and Skyllstad 2015.

9 Wenger 1998.

10 Hamburger Stadtteil-Profil 2013, 41; Regionalergebnisse 2011.

producing (beatmaking, record producing) and singing courses.¹¹ Metin shared the Academy aims to use hip-hop to “unite people over all borders so that they can create something new together.”¹² According to the Academy, by “transcending cultural differences,” Academy participants then can “exemplify effective and sustainable integration.”¹³ Supporting and promoting a cohort of professionally trained artists called the Ensemble who tour internationally and perform Tanztheaterproduktionen (dance theatre productions), and transforming hip-hop into high culture or Hochkultur are primary concerns. Hip-hop as high culture materializes best in the Ensemble’s contemporary/modern Tanztheaterproduktionen. Participating in these shows, however, is contingent on a participant integrating into the Academy itself.

Cultural Policy Bridges

The City of Hamburg’s agency of culture or *Kulturbehörde* provides a large portion of the Academy’s operating monies. The Academy structures its offerings in part to match the Kulturbehörde’s guidelines for the cultural exchange division, which funds intercultural and international exchanges. The intercultural funding guidelines specifically favor projects that bridge diverse groups of people through intercultural exchanges and have a cross-border effect or “*grenzüberschreitende Wirkung*,” which could mean blending “mainstream” or “subculture” or “traditional” or “modern” performance genres.¹⁴ The Academy fulfills these aims both through the Ensemble’s Tanztheaterproduktionen, which have mixed mainstream and subculture and/or traditional and modern genres (e.g., Baroque music and hip-hop), and through artistic intercultural and international exchanges at home and abroad.

These exchange efforts ideally produce bridging social capital, which produce greater trust among people with different social backgrounds, in this case via interethnic and inter-socioeconomic relationships and social networks.¹⁵ Bridging social capital often forms following the creation of bonding social capital: social networks among people with *similar* ethnic, religious or socioeconomic backgrounds. Both forms of social capital engender collective benefits of trustworthiness and mutual reciprocity, and thereby can contribute to social integration within society.¹⁶ Bridging social capital, though, is especially important because it means that diverse types of people are engaging with one another—whether they’re performers of

11 Home 2013; Metin 2013. All German-source quotes have been translated into English.

12 Metin 2013.

13 Fördern 2014.

14 Förderrichtlinie für interkulturelle Projekte 2013; Internationaler Kulturaustausch – Stadt Hamburg 2016.

15 Fukuyama 2002, 32-33; Putnam 2000, 22.

16 Putnam 2000, 19, 22.

different nationalities during an intercultural exchange or audience members and youths at a Tanztheaterproduktion. Essentially, if ethnic Germans and migrants bridge with one another and develop trust, they are more likely to accept each others' differences and live together peacefully.¹⁷

Additionally, German politicians benefit from the Academy's work and seek opportunities to highlight Academy youths' talents and any of the project's integration successes. Angela Merkel visited the Academy in 2010; Hamburg mayor Olaf Scholz travelled to Marseilles in 2013 to regale the Academy's international exchange with Marseille's Di6danse Crew.¹⁸ Cultural studies specialists Toby Miller and George Yudice write of a tendency among governments to not only "discipline" constituents but also "to *showcase* and *market* the citizen."¹⁹ In other words, by supporting projects that train migrant youths to be performers, the government in return receives examples of disciplined, integrated youths whom they can send abroad as cultural ambassadors.

Joining an Academy Community of Practice: A Process of Micro-political Integration

Academy students begin the process of joining a community of practice—one I link to micro-political integration—from day one.²⁰ Still, micro-political integration into the Academy happens through long-term engagement. Students first build relationships with one another, and learn social norms, practices and values. Next they connect with trainers and administrators, and master the organizational structure and power hierarchy. Academy participants then fit into an organizational mold and have learned accepted social behaviors that can benefit their "macro-political" integration into German society.²¹

Academy beginners start in Level 1. Approximately five hundred students (or approximately 91% of Academy participants) participate at this level at about 35 youth centers and schools throughout Hamburg. Students can just "show up" at any time during the cycle of the course. The roughly 9% remaining students participate in Levels 2, 3 or the Ensemble. Almost all courses beyond Level 1 take place at the Kulturpalast.²² If a trainer notices a student is dedicated and talented, he might recommend the student try out for Level 2. About 50 students participate in Level 2 courses that focus on increased professionalization. Students who have mastered Level 2 can continue on to Level 3, sometimes known as the Master

17 Rothchild 2016.

18 Bürgermeister zeigt sich beeindruckt von der Academy 2013.

19 Miller and Yudice 2002, 27.

20 Wenger 1998, 72–78.

21 Ibid., 173–174.

22 HipHop Academy Hamburg: Lokal – Global 2013.

Class. In addition, as of 2014, talented students from Level 2 NewStyle merged with the former Level 3/Master Class to form an intensive show group or *Intensiv/Showgruppe*. The group participates in international exchanges like the one to Marseilles.²³

The pinnacle of one's "career" at the Academy is the Ensemble. The Ensemble consists of approximately twelve youths (age 18+). Their talents include NewStyle dancing, bboying, graffiti art, beatboxing and rap. Students are paid to participate in Tanztheaterproduktionen, which play in Hamburg and tour Germany and abroad. For students desiring a professional career in performance, participating in the Ensemble is an incredible opportunity for publicity and advanced training. From an organizational perspective, these students have micro-politically integrated into the Academy, and, through their mutual engagement, constitute their own community of practice.

Learning the Shared Repertoire

Demonstrating micro-political integration begins with mastering organizational norms. Students in an organization or a community of practice must learn the "shared repertoire"—in Wenger's words, "[r]outines, words, tools, ways of doing things, actions or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice."²⁴ As more students become aware of this "collective knowledge," the meaning of these shared habits or behaviors grows.²⁵ Students learn the repertoire of norms from their instructors and peers. Trainers emphasize being punctual, following rules, acting professionally, showing respect for trainers and classmates, and being disciplined. Students who master these social norms become acolytes of what they have learned. They then spread shared ethics to their classmates or students, thereby demonstrating allegiance to the community and organization as well as an interest in improving it.

Participant Views of the Organization

When examining an organization's operations, one must grasp its structure, function and goals. Political theorist Christina Boswell explains that political "interests" and "performance goals" drive organizational behavior. An institution benefits if members feel they belong. Thus, organizations often respond favorably

²³ Ibid.; Peter 2013. Course totals and analysis of Academy offerings reflect programming as of February–August 2014.

²⁴ Wenger 1998, 83.

²⁵ Willner 2011, 166.

to demonstrations of “loyalty” or “commitment.”²⁶ To guide youths’ actions, organizations like the Academy must develop an easily comprehensible “set of norms and beliefs,” provide a “shared cognitive frame,” and assist students in figuring out the institutional environment.²⁷ Furthermore, “organizations also develop rituals, roles, and practices to help reduce uncertainty and stabilize social relations among members.”²⁸ These processes may be taken to describe the development of shared repertoire within a community of practice. To ensure student loyalty and attempts towards advancement, Academy trainers should transmit organizational practices that lead to micro-political integration into the Academy. Generally speaking, one might presume that the more advanced a student is at the Academy, the more aware she would be of Academy goals. The greater her awareness of goals, the more she could contribute to goal-setting, the organization’s focus, and productions.

Due to the hierarchical structure at the Academy, views on micro-political integration change significantly according to one’s place in the hierarchy. For beginners, micro-political integration begins with feeling comfortable and welcome in a neighborhood-based Level 1 course regardless of one’s background; here social bonds and sometimes bridges begin to form in the neighborhood. An intermediate Level 2/3 student might desire belonging or acceptance in the Billstedt-based Academy community and bridge with students from other neighborhoods. For a micro-politically integrated Ensemble member who tours internationally, micro-political integration asks for mastered social norms and professionalism and the ability to bridge with global artistic partners in intercultural exchanges abroad. Thus, one’s social and geographical positioning—whether in one’s neighborhood, at the Billstedt headquarters or touring abroad—alters a participant’s level of micro-political integration and ability to form bonding and/or bridging social capital. In this section, Academy participants share their experiences in becoming part of the organization.

Among beginners Anneliese (19) and Pamela (16), with whom I danced in Level 1, awareness of Academy goals differed, suggesting our trainer’s transmission of Academy aims was not precise. Anneliese, a high school student from an upscale neighborhood, cited the Academy’s purpose was to give youths from “problem neighborhoods” a chance to dance. She did not think most beginners knew the Academy was a social integration project; rather, kids came to dance and have fun. Anneliese found hip-hop to be an effective medium for social integration because it “unites” all youths, a sentiment with which Pamela agreed.²⁹ Pamela did not hold

26 Boswell 2009, 11.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid., referring to Meyer and Rowan 1991, 57–58.

29 Anneliese 2013. Due to the candid nature of student interviews on this article’s theme, I have given interviewees pseudonyms from multiple languages. Pseudonyms do not necessarily match interviewees’ ethnicities, but do reflect gender. In the case of the Academy co-founders, I use actual first names. Interviewees’ ages reflect their approximate ages at the time of interview.

German citizenship yet and fit more of the image policymakers envision when funding social integration programs. She knew integration was an Academy goal and found it to be a good method because: “Dancing and music often bring people together and at the HipHop Academy, there are a lot of foreigners and through the music, one often has fun dancing and it mutually helps people.”³⁰ These young women’s statements demonstrate that the Academy’s potential for social integration varies depending on each student’s background. Although our course took place in a neighborhood with a 35% migrant population, about half of our classmates were similar to Anneliese, being relatively financially well-off—hardly policy-makers’ target group. That said, for social bridges to form between youths with migration and working class backgrounds like Pamela and “ethnic Germans,” students like Anneliese *must* be present and, in my view, a 50/50 distribution of ethnic German students and students with migration backgrounds would be ideal for bridging.

Maria (15) is a Level 2/3 dancer and Intensiv/Showgruppe participant. She started NewStyle at the Academy when she was thirteen years old. Although Maria is unsure of the Academy’s official goals, she finds Academy administrators’ focus largely to be procuring and producing paid engagements. Still, she claims micro-political integration is embedded into the Academy system. Anyone can enter the institution, feel “at home” and progress within the hierarchy.³¹

Former Level 2 student Yağmur (24) also called the Academy a community and characterized it as a family. She felt every person was welcome, regardless of his or her origins or German fluency.³² Yağmur made some friends at the Academy, but she knew most people previously. Students with pre-existing bonds, such as friends from class or a former teacher from dance school, tend to do better in the Academy system.

Among “integrated” Ensemble members, views on the Academy’s goals and the ability to micro-politically integrate differ significantly. One might assume that Academy aims would be clearest to micro-politically integrated students who have ascended the organization’s ranks and helped structure institutional offerings by taking part in the goal-setting process—having contributed their opinions as to what classes, levels, and artistic productions the Academy should offer and what content and output these offerings should display. Nevertheless, goal recognition and perceptions of the Academy differed significantly depending on an Ensemble member’s hip-hop expertise (e.g. NewStyle, graffiti, etc.).

Ensemble member Jeff’s (24) view on the Academy’s purpose was tied closely to professional development. Although he believed that hip-hop in itself was an integrative force that could build community, his specific formulation of the Academy’s purpose did not include bridging diverse groups of people, which was part of the Academy’s initial scheme and is specified clearly in its fundraising materials. He

30 Pamela 2013.

31 Maria 2013.

32 Yağmur 2012.

attributed its integration impact to be tied largely to language development among migrant youths, as he considered the majority of his students already to be socially integrated but mentioned that some lacked flawless language skills. Jeff's personal teaching focus thus centered less directly on social bridging. He valued different organizational goals like building professional artists, but to achieve continual growth (and funding), the Academy must ensure clear transmission and reproduction of its social integration "bridging" goals as well.³³ As a trainer, Jeff was a key person to perform these actions and perhaps with Germany's refugee influx, this goal will become more prominent in his courses as well.

Ensemble member Joachim (25) is a long-term Academy member and witnessed the evolution of Academy goals since the institution's beginning. Initially, he felt Academy participants shared something akin to what Wenger terms a "joint enterprise"—a "stated goal" that "creates among participants relations of mutual accountability"—which could reinforce students feeling like they belong to a community of practice.³⁴ As a student, Joachim established contact with diverse types of people. But six years after the Academy's founding, he primarily interacted with Academy colleagues who had similar social backgrounds to him, i.e. having strong educational prospects and coming from economically stable families. Joachim attributed the Academy's shifting demographics to its structural change towards being an agency or *Agentur* for high culture artists. Specifically, the creation of the Ensemble helped to fulfill the Kulturbehörde (Hamburg city culture agency's) intercultural-exchange funding guidelines of bridging sub- and mainstream cultures through bringing hip-hop to mainstream stages (or to high culture). The Ensemble even paired with the chamber music orchestra Ensemble Resonanz for the Tanztheaterproduktion called Sampled Identity in 2013.³⁵ In other words, although the Academy initially achieved social integration almost exclusively through its local courses, as its artistic exchanges and Tanztheaterproduktionen have increased, the Academy's focus has expanded to include bridging international artists and genres. That said, Joachim's impression also could have changed due to his upward progression within the system—meaning if he were to participate in Level 1 today, he might find perceptions of the Academy to be more heterogeneous, which is the finding of my research.³⁶

33 Boswell 2009, 11.

34 Wenger 1998, 77–78.

35 Förderrichtlinie für interkulturelle Projekte 2013, Internationaler Kulturaustausch – Stadt Hamburg 2016.

36 Joachim 2013.

Professionalization at the Academy

The Academy has grown to become a training school where burgeoning artists can professionalize their skills.³⁷ Trainers and students regard the professionalization aspect of the Academy both negatively and positively. As the Academy continues to develop its professionalization focus, I believe it is crucial that students feel comfortable with their instructors so they can form bridging mentorships, which can catalyze a student's integration into the Academy. In my own course, I saw how Pamela benefitted from connecting with our instructor. Although he did not share information about how to advance within the institution during class time, he imparted this knowledge to Pamela one-on-one so that she had the opportunity to go further.³⁸

One critic of the professionalization was Sophia: a bubbly, nineteen-year-old, former intermediate Academy dancer. She exuded energy and busted out b-girl moves for a mini photo shoot at the end of her interview. She felt the Academy's shift towards professionalism and being an agency restricted artistic expression. When students first entered the Academy, she felt many wanted to train as a group rather than compete against one another. As they became aware of numbered Levels 1–3, Sophia found students considered themselves to be more talented or professional based on these divisions. She disliked having to dance with particular people, through choreographed routines, rather than choosing her partners as she would at a hip-hop battle. She claimed the need to present an onstage product trumped the emotional attachment students had for one another.³⁹ What is missing then from Sophia's experience? Essentially, due to the Academy's power dynamics, professionalism focus and hierarchical structure, Sophia did not feel she bonded or bridged well with other participants in her level.⁴⁰ By contrast, she feels emotionally connected to other dancers during underground battles and community jams outside the Academy.⁴¹

Overall, participants' views on the processes of becoming part of the Academy's community of practice differ depending on their perceptions of and social relationships within the Academy. Dropouts viewed the Academy less favorably [Sophia]; Ensemble members who made a living from the institution were more positive *if* the organization was moving in their preferred direction [Jeff, Peter]. In the next section, I highlight how academic theories about organizations can inform a clearer understanding of the Academy and the “political behavior” of students, trainers and administrators.

37 HipHop Academy Hamburg: Lokal – Global 2013.

38 Pamela 2013.

39 Sophia 2013.

40 See Turino 2008, 26.

41 Sophia 2013.

The Organization and its Politics

To micro-politically integrate into the Academy, a student must learn the values, norms and behaviors of the organization, a task that is inherently political. Sociologist Andrew Pettigrew believes “political behavior” is “behavior by individuals, or, in collective terms, by sub-units, within an organization that makes a claim against the resource-sharing system of the organization.”⁴² Within organizations, members share duties and form “sub-units,” which bond together around specific tasks. At the Academy, these sub-units form naturally through the division of classes and levels. Pettigrew explains that tension can arise in organizations because each sub-unit has its own special interests. Disagreement occurs at the Academy among trainers and students regarding the structure and focus of the institution and consequently, political behavior plays out. According to Pettigrew, within organizations, sub-units (interpreted here as Academy levels) attempt to procure limited “resources” (e.g., money, rehearsal space, instruction). The sub-units, like the Ensemble members, that succeed are those that convince power-players of the worthiness of their cause.⁴³ The most successful integrated sub-units are negotiators who know when to put in a request and correspondingly receive more engagements, money and exposure, sometimes at the expense of Level 1 students, the Academy majority.⁴⁴

Sociologist Tom Burns’ explanation of corporate organization resonates with the Academy’s operations:

Corporations are co-operative systems assembled out of the usable attributes of people. They are also social systems within which people compete for advancement; in so doing they make use of others ... The hierarchic order of rank and power that prevails in them is at the same time a single control system and a career ladder.⁴⁵

One sees a corporate-like structure at the Academy through its entrenched hierarchy with the top echelon receiving increased benefits and responsibility. Within an organization, “power is, then, a property of social relationships, not an attribute of the actor,” and can take many forms.⁴⁶ Administrators retain power over Ensemble members because they give them the opportunities and resources they desire, whether Ensemble income, class offerings or international exchanges. Still, trainers do not have the same hold over Level 2 and 3 students because they offer classes that youths could take through other integration projects or if economically able, at private dance schools.⁴⁷ For resource holders—here

⁴² Pettigrew 1973, 17.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Burns 1961, 257, 261 via Pettigrew 1973, 17–18.

⁴⁶ Pettigrew 1973, 26.

⁴⁷ Additional Hamburg non-profit organizations with a hip-hop focus include ElbCoast Unity, DeluxeKidz e.V., and Crossover e.V..

Academy administrators—to hold power, they must make students “dependent” on and “obligated” towards them—consistently giving students the programs they desire yet could not afford or find through other organizations.⁴⁸ For Ensemble members and trainers, the Academy offers a significantly larger amount of work opportunities for hip-hop instruction than other integration projects, which puts instructors in a weaker position to negotiate pay or other benefits.⁴⁹

Such political behavior at the Academy reinforces the importance of integrating into the Academy system. Pettigrew shares, “as long as organizations continue as resource-sharing systems where there is an inevitable scarcity of those resources, political behaviour will occur.”⁵⁰ Many organizations prize and positively recognize “upward” progress (e.g., at the Academy, reaching the Ensemble).⁵¹ When this occurs, participants might “attempt to influence procedures for upward mobility.”⁵² Pettigrew makes observations about “resource-sharing” that also apply to the Academy. He suggests that when a sub-unit (i.e., an Academy level) receives “new resources” (e.g., at the Academy—a grant, city funding, or international exchange), it could try to contribute more to the organization’s decision-making. This could be viewed as positive, but could also incite jealousy or defensive behavior in other levels accustomed to having greater clout. This change in the allocation of resources can result in “new political action” and upset “the existing distribution of power.”⁵³

Academy Authority

A key aspect of mastering micro-political integration is the ability to respect leaders and connect with them because authority figures generally possess the most power within organizations. Pettigrew describes sociologist Talcott Parsons’ position that “authority refers to the legitimate position of an individual or group.”⁵⁴ Political scientist Joseph Nye also emphasizes the need for institutions and their leaders to have established “legitimacy” before their power is effective.⁵⁵ Pettigrew overviews the debate between Parsons and sociologist Anthony Giddens about where power truly lies. To Parsons, power belongs to “the achievement of collective

48 Blau 1964, 118 via Pettigrew 1973, 26.

49 Although instructors can work with other integration projects for specific events, the Academy provides regular, weekly work. Dance instructors also can and do work for private dance schools.

50 Pettigrew 1973, 20.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid., 20–21.

54 Pettigrew 1973, 24 referring to Parsons 1967, 319.

55 Nye 2011, 82–84, 91.

goals.”⁵⁶ The Academy’s structure is shifting, however, and there is little agreement regarding the direction of the organization. Student goal-recognition also varies, as some students like Anneliese were aware of the project’s integration focus and others like Maria were not. Giddens argues against Parsons, claiming he assumes power is “legitimate” and that power-holders and organizational members agree on organizational aims. Instead, Giddens emphasizes the “necessarily hierarchical character of power, and the divisions of interest which are frequently consequent upon it.”⁵⁷ In Parsons’ estimation, power lies in the function of the institution to act as a group and to have a cohesive identity. Power holders, however, are individuals who might or might not act in the interest of the collective and can operate without consensus.⁵⁸

Therefore, it may be difficult for students to determine which Academy power players they should petition to get the classes, programs, or other resources they desire. The Academy’s Managing Director holds the most authority and directs the future of the institution; several trainers expressed that she wants to present hip-hop as Hochkultur. Besides her, other administrators’ decision-making power is ambiguous. Administrators aside, trainers hold the most authority and power because they determine which students progress through Levels 1–3. Because several trainers are also Ensemble members, these individuals shape the Academy significantly. Each trainer has individual strengths and although the Academy Artistic Director suggests what material a course should cover, instructors ultimately choose what to teach. The Artistic Director said it is difficult to dictate what students should learn because “hip-hop is not an institute,” rather a “street culture.”⁵⁹ Although this fits into the realm of what hip-hop means to underground adherents, because the Academy *is* an institute where the focus is to excel and ascend, having limited guidelines for what beginner courses should teach could be detrimental to Level 1 students who do not learn material that will help them progress.

Discipline: Trained Bodies and Scripted Voices

One of the foremost-shared values at the Academy is discipline. I observed that at the Academy, being disciplined meant not only demonstrating “proper” behavior but also applying the appropriate rigor and concentration to training. Trainer Max insisted Academy regulars are not necessarily more talented but are more trained and disciplined. They consequently are more likely to micro-politically integrate into the institution.⁶⁰ Through its discipline-related efforts, the Academy finds certain

⁵⁶ Parsons 1967, 504, via Pettigrew 1973, 24.

⁵⁷ Giddens 1968, 264, via Pettigrew 1973, 24.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Artistic Director 2013.

⁶⁰ Max, pers. comm., 2011.

success: its student totals and offerings are growing while shows are more polished and professional.

Disciplining of the mind, body and voice happens within dance courses or at summer camps, where rappers learn what messages are “appropriate” and dancers complete exercises that tone and condition their bodies. The 2011 Level 2 Summer camp was a four-week-long intensive training camp during which students took hip-hop classes for three hours a day, with the remaining five hours consisting of eating and social education. Trainers choreographed students’ movements and prized precision. Though hip-hop dance generally is improvisatory, the NewStyle instructor expected that students execute “clean” movements, without extraneous motions, matching their movements to his. Achieving this accuracy is difficult for students because of the closeness of the movements to the body. Instead of arms making movements at specific angles, they moved fluidly and close to the torso. One must “hit” the exact angle in relation to one’s body or face. Bodily discipline now defines the summer camp’s title; administrators renamed the camp Bootcamp.

Discipline is not limited to dance. The Academy guides students’ creation of rap lyrics. In efforts to promote conscious, positive rap, trainer Theo encouraged students to “keep it positive” and reduce profanity. Although students wanted to rap about their neighborhoods, he asked them to expand their rhymes and see alternative perspectives. He acknowledged that every city has “bad” neighborhoods, but why dwell on this situation? Instead, students should seek change and be different from “gangsta” rappers who rap about drugs, sex, violence or “bling-bling.”⁶¹ Such Academy “guidance” about lyric content can be interpreted as curtailing migrant youths’ self-expression.

Theo disciplined youths to adhere to what he thought were ideal standards of expression and behavior. By restricting youths’ outputs, however, he inadvertently limited lyrics along with their meanings. As linguist Jannis Androutsopoulos explains, “cultural referencing” in hip-hop lyrics has been the norm since hip-hop’s beginnings. References to popular commercial items, people or places “construct a fragmented panorama of local knowledge that includes history and traditions, high art and mass culture, places and institutions.” It “indexes a hybrid cultural horizon, in which global media culture, European cultural heritage, and specifically local traditions merge.”⁶² Through lyrics, youths fuse diverse elements of their lives together into a musical message. By impeding youths’ narratives and disciplining their expressions to be “appropriate,” their pasts and presents do not come through their art. Although the Academy suggests that hip-hop serves as a “homeland” for youths with diverse ethnic backgrounds, this particular trainer discouraged youths from making lyrical references to their actual homes and neighborhoods.⁶³

61 Theo, pers. comm., 2011.

62 Androutsopoulos 2009, 49.

63 HipHop Academy Hamburg: Lokal – Global 2013.

If instructors limit youths' lyrics, the youths' "identities of participation" within the Academy may be interpreted as becoming diluted. Wenger explains that "identities of participation" (and belonging) within communities of practice increase when members' knowledge, former and current identities, and past actions or practices become part of the community's "history" and "the constitution of its practice."⁶⁴ If students do not feel that institutional leaders or other participants value their ideas, they, like Sophia, could form "identities of non-participation" that increasingly "marginalize" them because their experiences become extraneous.⁶⁵ These youths often drop out and interestingly, the Academy's rap division has one of the lowest amounts of participants, especially in upper levels.

Gender Roles & Dynamics

Trainers not only share values, but through their repertoire of actions, words, and physical movements, impart gender roles that begin to define the community. As Wenger explains, a shared repertoire consists of "the discourse by which members [of a community of practice] create meaningful statements about the world, as well as the styles by which they express their forms of membership and their identities as members."⁶⁶

Gender narratives offer one view into an organization's dynamics and point towards behaviors considered "normal." Boys tend to rap and beatbox while girls dance. We hear men's voices and see women's bodies. If, like at the Academy, primarily boys occupy the highest ranks (eleven of twelve Ensemble members were men), a girl's successful micro-political integration into the Academy could consist of her remaining at the bottom. Maria shared stories of trainers not taking girls seriously in Academy courses. Two male Ensemble members and trainers claimed that apart from the Ensemble's sole female member, there were no additional girls ready or talented enough who would fit into the Ensemble's (male) culture. Their comments, however, do not match the fact that girls occupy significantly more spots than boys in Level 2 and Level 3 for NewStyle, the largest contributor to the Ensemble.⁶⁷

Being aware of gender dynamics is important because directors, trainers and choreographers often score entire shows without student input. This happens most in lower levels. The lack of artistic license and participatory democratic principle is complicated because the institution is partially state-funded, participates in international exchanges, and thus needs to deliver guaranteed products. Nevertheless, shows lacked the "musical say" that music educator Sharon Davis

⁶⁴ Wenger 1998, 215.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 203.

⁶⁶ Wenger 1998, 83.

⁶⁷ Maria 2013.

theorizes as “[o]pportunities to contribute in ensemble settings and the development of musical voice through ownership, agency, relevance, and personal expression—and the *investment* of these dynamic and fluid meanings in the ensemble process.”⁶⁸ Davis’ description reinforces the joint-enterprise aspect of a community of practice, in that participants work together towards a collectively chosen, common goal. By collaborating to design a show (i.e., tackling a joint enterprise), Academy students could develop “mutual accountability.”⁶⁹ Yet due in part to funding constraints and the need to remain relevant, the Academy has prescribed curriculums that often encourage students not to be themselves but to be what the trainers, the administrators and bureaucrats *need* them to be. While this keeps the project funded, thriving and able to serve neighborhoods across Hamburg, it minimizes individual contributions of students to the Academy’s enterprise, which could generate further senses of student belonging.

Creating Relationships with Power Holders and Peers

A key point for mastering micro-political integration and feeling like one belongs in the Academy’s community of practice is the building of bridges and other relationships with one’s instructors and fellow students. Classmates have insight into the organization and may share rules and norms with newcomers, although only if these are clear. Creating bridging relationships with “different” power and resource holders, namely administrators and trainers, improves one’s chances of advancement. If trainers have established a mentoring relationship with a talented, hard-working student, such as in the case of Jeff and Pamela, they are more likely to notice and encourage their promotion.

Ensemble member Peter (24) highlighted his and Jeff’s essential roles in the Academy’s decision to offer more courses and levels and how close relationships to administrators aided their success.⁷⁰ The students mastered not only the Academy’s organizational norms, but also the art of when to make a request to administrators. Initially, administrators planned to have battles, a summer camp and a yearlong Level 1 class. Jeff and Peter productively negotiated with administrators and together they decided to do Tanztheaterproduktionen. The Ensemble also emerged from the pair’s successful, well-timed advocacy.⁷¹ Other students’ negotiations centered around receiving trainer positions and Ensemble placements, or participating in exchanges.

At the Academy, formation of close peer relationships depends largely on one’s level of participation and division (e.g., dance, rap, etc.). When feelings of community

⁶⁸ Davis 2011, 266.

⁶⁹ Wenger 1998, 77.

⁷⁰ Peter 2013.

⁷¹ Ibid.

arise within the Academy, they commonly occur through joint enterprises like the upper levels' international exchanges in which students like Maria participated and/or during moments of intense emotion like the culmination of the 2011 summer camp. After four weeks of hard training and socializing together, friendships had formed and the pure joy of completion and team spirit was evident through the students' group bows. During many curtain calls following Academy shows (particularly in the upper levels), students exhibited a performer's afterglow. They successfully represented the Academy and constituted a community of practice, having just achieved a "joint enterprise" through "mutual engagement." This trend aligns with Thomas Turino's "politics of participation" theory, which suggests one connects a musical experience to an "emotion" and further to an organization.⁷²

Conclusion: A New Era for German Social Integration

Heretofore, migrant youths' micro-political integration into the Academy has guaranteed the production of players for artistic exchanges, international tours and Tanztheaterproduktionen. There are examples of micro-politically integrated Academy participants who feel they belong to the institution as well as a noteworthy amount of dropouts. In the end, for students trying to advance within the Academy, understanding the organization's "structure," and *who* to approach *when* and for *what* one wants are key.⁷³ Although according to Pettigrew, power holders "can change or maintain structures as well as the norms and expectations upon which these structures rest," participants trying to figure out a changing structure can feel at a loss because the organization's structure and goals guide their behavior.⁷⁴

Because organizations like the Academy have multiple goals (i.e., social integration, professional development, intercultural and international exchanges, and hip-hop instruction), it is natural that confusion, disagreement and a certain amount of displeasure would be present.⁷⁵ Although some students knew they were participating in a social integration project, some trainers did not identify social integration as an Academy aim. To encourage greater feelings of belonging to the Academy among students of all levels, the institution should develop methods and mediums (e.g., community meetings, peer mentorship programs, workshops with other trainers) for goal transmission, and should engage more students (especially marginalized girls) in goal-setting and decision-making processes.

As the organization grew, its offerings developed in response to self-advocates like Peter and Jeff. Despite Ensemble members' varying levels of friendship and occasional disagreements about the Academy's future direction (i.e., whether it

⁷² Turino 2008, 210.

⁷³ Pettigrew 1973, 30.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 30–31.

⁷⁵ Reiners 2008 via Willner 2011, 160.

is moving more towards Hochkultur), the Ensemble constituted a community of practice. Members had a “shared repertoire” of styles and worldviews (i.e., opinions & beliefs about popular culture & society); mutual engagements through training and private socialization; and the joint enterprises of Tanztheaterproduktionen and international exchanges. In many ways, the Ensemble was an example of an integrated group.

That being said, the middle levels within the Academy’s course hierarchy epitomized the challenges the Academy faces long-term in regards to meeting individual demands and defining its structure. Level 2 & 3 students like Maria were at a crossroads in their Academy engagement. That involved deciding whether to commit to the institution and micro-politically integrate. When things Maria thought she would receive (like the Master Class) dissolved or changed in nature, she felt the disappointment of discontinued opportunity.⁷⁶

To progress “upwards” at the Academy, one must garner enough power to impact the organization’s structure in a way that benefits one’s aspirations—as Peter and Jeff did. Those people not achieving this, such as Sophia, can become frustrated, feel excluded, and abandon the organization. Several students and trainers particularly could not embrace the organization’s joint enterprise of choreographed and scripted Tanztheaterproduktionen involving restrictions to students’ artistic expression. Their departures highlight the challenge of the Academy to incorporate such less dominant voices into their decision-making processes.

Pettigrew explains that money and time limit what power-holders (e.g., administrators) can offer, and those members who negotiate and receive what they want “win” in the political sense.⁷⁷ Nonetheless, for the *organization* to succeed and specifically for the Ensemble to regenerate itself and attract students like Maria, it must expand its current “internally focused core membership” to include youths with different styles, repertoires and goals.⁷⁸ This expansion might mean meeting different demands and seeking out other voices.

Incorporating those voices has benefits for social integration as well. Political scientist Francis Fukuyama explains that, “social capital within a particular group or network can produce positive externalities by teaching people social virtues such as honesty, reciprocity and the keeping of commitments.”⁷⁹ This reflects the foundation that the Academy lays: bonding social capital flourishes yet people “have a tendency to build group solidarity at the expense of heterogeneous individuals [e.g., Academy dropouts], or those who exist outside the main group.”⁸⁰ If communities have more “tightly bonded” rather than bridged groups, in-fighting can occur and break up the community spirit and prevent individuals’ learning

76 Maria 2013.

77 Pettigrew 1973, 30–31.

78 Wenger 1998, 252.

79 Fukuyama 2004, 40.

80 Ibid.

from each other.⁸¹ In other words, when Academy students attempt to progress in the institution, they often bond with like-minded or like-goaled students. This creates competition rather than collaboration throughout the entire organization. For the organization to prosper long-term, it is essential that bridging continues and resources are as evenly distributed as possible.

Ideally, institutions that serve youths would allow each youth to also tell his or her story through a unique form of expression. Realistically, though, funding constraints and thematic shows limit room for creativity and as youths progress through the system, they participate in more professional shows with more-defined themes. While trainers might try to have the students direct the writing process as much as possible, in the end, they are hired to help them achieve their best and “lyric guidance” is bound to happen.

How then can students feel invested in a community of practice at every level? How can the Academy empower Level 1 students who might never advance within the Academy hierarchy? And is it possible to provide mediums through which youths can express themselves fully while still achieving integration goals? The Academy offers a HipHop Open Day that brings Level 1 students to Billstedt for a show, but an additional solution would be to offer shows where Level 1 classes take place. This way, students could invite school friends and neighbors, and correspondingly bolster their local communities by contributing to artistic life. Neighborhood shows would also be a venue where students could express themselves more fully without needing to follow a script or show theme.

Whichever direction the Academy moves in the future, it would be beneficial to include as many students as possible and their local communities in integrative processes. The Academy is an integration project for youths in which youths like Peter and Jeff have made a large impact in its goal-setting and focus. Now it is time for youths with less dominant voices like Sophia, Maria or Pamela to have their chance to contribute—alongside youths whose arrival in Hamburg is much more recent. Through the Academy, Hamburg has worked to integrate and empower the children and grandchildren of its 20th-century immigrants. Today’s questions include how to assist the new population of 21st-century refugees who will need to believe that they too belong to Germany. These youths have completely different migration histories from the Academy’s target group heretofore. It is unlikely that they will be ready to jump on stage and rap in perfected German soon, but perhaps a refugee teen from Eritrea or Syria will find his way to Billstedt and rap in his native language or spray images from his “homeland” in graffiti class. In these moments, integration through the performing arts consists of unlocking the door to self-expression and dialogue. A great testament to the Academy’s integration success would be to see Germany’s welcoming culture living on through youths just like Peter, Jeff, Maria, Sophia and Pamela—building bridges through hip-hop.

81 Ibid.

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